

# THE STUDENT WORLD

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JOHN R. MOTT, *Chairman and Editor*

H. C. RUTGERS, *Treasurer*

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## Editorial

READERS of *The Student World* will recall the number devoted largely to estimates of the Christian religion given by adherents of non-Christian faiths. In striking contrast are the testimonies in the present number of those who were once members of non-Christian religions, but who have subsequently come into a reasonable and vital faith in Christ. As a symposium of religious experiences it is unique. The writers are students and teachers who formerly represented all the principal non-Christian religions. Though their homes are in different parts of the non-Christian world, most of them have had opportunities to observe the working and influence of the Christian religion in so-called Christian lands. Each one was invited to indicate what he had found in Christ which could not be obtained in or through the non-Christian religion to which he was once related.

Readers will be impressed by the note of reality which sounds out from every one of this remarkable group of religious experiences. The fairness and honesty with which the writers have dealt with both non-Christian and Christian faiths is most evident. While they have recognized the shortcomings of organized Christianity, they have not permitted this to deflect them from recognizing and accepting vital Christian truth. It is highly significant that virtually every one of the testimonies is Christocentric. With true perspective and contagious conviction they rivet attention on the Divine Personality, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Non-Christian students everywhere, whether adherents of non-Christian faiths or not professing any faith, will find in these vital autobiographical notes—these records of soul struggles and of victorious quest for satisfying truth—invaluable suggestion and guidance. As a practical study in comparative religion, here will be found material of no uncertain, but of truly scientific worth. If religions are to be tested by their fruits, such evidence cannot be ignored. In fact, as a practical or working apologetic, it is believed that this symposium possesses a freshness and an authentic and a self-evidencing character which lends to it peculiar timeliness and value.

The symposium will be invaluable to Christian workers whether in the Occident or in the Orient, setting forth as it does the most germinating and dynamic religious truths, the strongest grounds of appeal, and the most vital processes. To an unusual degree we have here illustrated the new attitude and spirit which should govern the approach, the methods, and the message of Christian workers in their relations to non-Christians, namely, the positive, constructive, irenic, appreciative, and reverent, as contrasted with the negative, destructive, militant, unsympathetic, and irreverent. All students of Christian heritage and background, and all members of our Christian Student Movements will be greatly helped by fixing their attention upon the aspects of the Christian faith which have evidently come with greatest power of appeal to those to whom Christ and His truth have appeared for the first time. This in turn will greatly enrich their conceptions of Christ and of the Christian faith. Moreover, as we read of the prices which these witnesses have paid for the truth that actually liberates, transforms, and energizes, may it not prompt the reflection that many of us who bear the Christian name hold our faith all too superficially and lightly? In this connection with what searching and humbling effect should come to many of us the membership requirement of a certain branch of one of the Movements in the Federation, "Are you ready to die for Jesus Christ?"

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The Editor's attention has been called to the fact that the writer, Dr. Ferdinand Ossendowski, mentioned in the July, 1924, issue as a Russian officer, is of Polish nationality, a professor of technological chemistry and economic geography.



# Why I Continue to be a Christian

By C. T. EAPEN

WHY do I continue to be a Christian? In defending my position I do not propose to defend Christianity as manifested in many un-Christian ways both in the East and in the West. The Christianity I purpose to defend is the pristine faith lived and taught by Jesus and practised by numerous souls down to our own time. Then again the Hinduism over which I give preference to Christianity is not the Hinduism spoken of by many missionaries here, the Hinduism that is eternally sorrowful, that is engaged in burning widows, casting children to the crocodiles, and throwing people under the wheels of the Juggernaut car! Hinduism to such people is of course nothing but ignorance and superstition. Who can dare to say this of a faith which, centuries before Christ, pointed the way to God and taught the supremacy of the soul over the body and even to-day manages to hold the allegiance of almost one-fourth of the human race, by no means all of whom are steeped in ignorance? Does not the Bible itself teach us that in generations gone by God had not left Himself without a witness (Acts XIV:16, 17)? To deny any light or truth to these religions is to adopt the theory that it took a wearisomely long time for our God to realize the needs of mankind!

## Wherein Lies the Difference?

Where, then, is the difference? The one supreme thing in Christianity is the Personality of the God-man Jesus. The Jesus that commands the attention of the people of India is not merely a fabrication of the human mind, but an objective reality. He is not even that man-God who progressively achieved the fulness of Godhead. There are many such gods in the Hindu pantheon, who lived good lives and approximated to Jesus at least in some of their teachings. The problem is, then, whom to choose,—Buddha or Christ? Rama or Christ? The problem vanishes when Jesus is recognized as the incarnate Son of God. Considering the cumulative evidences of His life and teachings, setting aside individual prejudices and vagaries, we of the East do not have much difficulty in believing the divinity of Jesus. The

sublime story of God taking human form has for the Hindu mind a charm and an attraction beyond words. Many a silent admirer asks the missionary, as the people of Antioch asked St. Paul, to come and tell his story again.

### Three Aspects of Special Appeal

#### 1. Jesus the Servant

The characteristic Hindu conception of God is pantheistic. One of the highest representatives, the Brahma, is passionless, immovable, unsearchable, and ineffable. Because he is incomprehensible he is spoken of as Nirguna (devoid of qualities). What help, comfort, and guidance could such a god impart to a human soul? It is left in its perilous voyage to work out its own Karma, like a ship in a tempestuous sea without chart or compass. Many are the tragic wrecks. What a difference when Jesus Christ comes upon the scene! He is the shepherd who leaves the ninety and nine and goes after the one that is lost. He came to save the lost ones of Israel. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," He says. "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." He fulfilled this assertion to the very letter. He healed the sick, comforted the sorrowful, cast out devils, and fed the hungry. To Him the human body, which the Hindus regard as evil, had not anything intrinsically abhorrent about it.

He had a higher mission to fulfil for which the bodily ministry was only a preliminary. That was His ministry to spiritual needs. Just as He healed bodily sickness, He also healed the maladies of the soul. Many a Hindu Rishi told the way to get out of sin, but none claimed the right to forgive sins. It was not a false claim either. To the woman taken in adultery He says, "Neither do I condemn thee, go, and sin no more." Remember that these words were addressed to a woman, thought not to possess any soul. Jesus is not a God who lives in some solitary place far removed from the haunts of humanity, but lives amongst them and works for man and woman, young and old, Jew and Gentile, and Greek and Barbarian without any discrimination.

#### 2. Jesus the Revealer

Jesus Christ once for all solved for all true believers in Him



some of the most perplexing problems of human life which had baffled the efforts of many a generation. There is nothing which has engaged the attention of man so constantly as the search for God. The Hindus, the great religious leaders of the ancient world, had their gods partake in racial warfare and internecine feuds. They were made to eat, drink, and be merry. Men were gods' playthings. Even the Hebrew prophets were in the vortex of confusion about their gods. Jesus Christ lifted the veil and revealed God to mankind—a God-Father of us all, helping, comforting, and meting out justice without indulgence.

Human life and death were not devoid of difficulties. Hindus conceived of human existence as an illusion. For man to assert his own real existence is but the raving of his *avidya* (ignorance). Hindu philosophers were entangled in the meshes of their own philosophy. In order to free the soul from the entanglements of the body, human endowments are to be starved, qualities suppressed, activities of all kinds stayed, ambition and every other desire, even the noblest and purest, quenched. This aspect of Hinduism makes its outlook the opposite of the optimistic attitude of Christianity, which teaches all to grow into the full manhood of Jesus.

There was nothing more grim to the ancients than death. Some thought that the curtain fell once for all over the drama of life; others thought that to die was only to be born again in quite uncertain form. This inevitable cycle of births and rebirths made life a drudgery. It often killed zeal and ambition. Once again Jesus removed the mystery by His resurrection from the dead. Jesus gave us the assurance that there is something beyond this life, to every faithful believer a glorious life in the presence of God. Surely it makes a difference to believe in the idea of God, life, death, and the life to come as revealed by Jesus.

### 3. Jesus the Transformer

In these hard matter-of-fact days there is nothing more convincing about Jesus than His power to transform; He has even given us the power to become the Sons of God. The very power which transformed the persecutor, Saul of Tarsus, into an ardent advocate, the unbelieving Thomas into a confirmed believer, and the wavering Peter into the chief of apostles, is working as really

and as effectively to-day. Not a soul who has implicitly put his trust in Him has ever been ashamed. It was on the evening when, dejected and despondent, he tried to put an end to his life that Sadhu Sundar Singh saw the vision of a cross in the solitary compartment of a train in which he was travelling. It was an epoch in his history. Ever since he has been passing from glory to glory showing the way to many from their sins and wickedness. Gandhi and Tagore, though not baptized Christians, give unstinted praise to Jesus and His worthy followers. That which has won for Gandhi the title of the greatest of living men is the spirit of Jesus he has imbibed from the Sermon on the Mount. Not only are there these men of world renown, but there are hundreds of others, unassuming and unheard of, who follow the example of Jesus and form the source of inspiration to many in their community. This power of transforming it was that made early Christianity—a handful of men and women drawn from the residue of society—able to cope with a long-established religion and a mighty empire. These Christians were so different that even their enemies could not help remarking on their love for one another and their devotion to Jesus.

Hinduism presents a different picture. It offers emancipation to all who merely carry out the rituals and ceremonies at stated times. All that it requires of one is to attain to a true knowledge of self, of the fact that he has no separate existence, and is one with the Supreme Soul. There are individuals who have reached heights of personal sanctity and holiness, but the religion as a whole can never boast of having set a high moral and ethical standard. Even some of the gods themselves were far from being morally perfect. An ancient sage once said of a god, "Listen to the story of Hari, but do not think of doing his deeds." But it is the humble privilege of the Christian to say "Whereas I was blind, now I see."



# Why I am a Christian

By SHARAJIT K. MUKERJIE

BORN of Christian parents I shall nevertheless try to state just why I prefer the religion of Jesus to the religion of my ancestors: namely, Hinduism, as I know the latter from observation and study.

To me, a native of India, Christianity as an institution with all its denominations and creeds, is just as poor and useless as Hinduism. It is the religion of Jesus as that great Galilean Prophet and Master Mind preached and practised it in His lifetime, that I believe in.

## Reasons for Being a Christian

### 1. The Christian Conception of God

To me God is like a just, loving, and merciful Father and not a revenging, fearful, and absolute judge. This brings me into closer relationship to God and I can come to Him at any time and anywhere without formal introductory ceremonies. God has real meaning in my life, both at times of greatest success and at moments of deepest failure. I can reach Him and talk with Him as a son talks with his father. The idea of prayer is more practical and reasonable to a Christian.

### 2. The Christian Teaching with Regard to the Body

As a Christian I have received a better and more reasonable and comprehensive idea of my body. To a Hindu the body is nothing but a source of evil and a means of degradation of the soul; but to me it is a living temple of God. To keep my animal passion and bodily lusts under control I have to take as much care of my body as of my mind.

### 3. The Christian Emancipation of the Mind

Being a Christian I am more free in thought and feeling than my Hindu friends. My religion does not want me to observe rites, festivities, and ceremonies, but requires of me straight moral life. Hinduism is a combination of folk and priestly religions. Religion by proxy through priests and mendicants is not for me.

I want the thrill and satisfaction of living my own religion and working my own salvation.

#### 4. The Christian Position with Regard to One's Neighbour

Christianity has given me a broader idea about my neighbours. "Love thy neighbour as thyself." To Jesus a Samaritan and other Gentiles were just as good neighbours as His own people, the Jews. So to me as a follower of that cosmopolitan Prophet the untouchables and foreigners are just as good neighbours as my own previous caste members, the Brahmins. The brotherhood of man is what the world needs to-day, and Jesus made that practicable two thousand years ago. Jesus has taught me democracy and from His life and teachings I find that "passive resistance" is more Christian than war and revolution. Through Christianity my narrow prejudices against any people other than my own countrymen have been entirely removed and I understand my neighbours better now. This gives me a vision of a stage in the evolution of the world when there will be no hatred and war—a peaceful and safer world to live in. Jesus' teaching is hastening that great day.

#### 5. The Christian Respect for Woman

As a Christian my respect for women is of the highest order. Suppression and degradation of women, such as too early marriage, child motherhood, prohibition of widow re-marriage, are evils which any level-headed modern man will recognize as such. Christianity at once removed the possibilities of such lamentable conditions of human society because Jesus gave a different conception of woman and definitely denounced the double code, one law for man and another for woman.

In summing up, I may say that the religion of Jesus has made me a better man through the realization: that God is my father and that all men are brothers; that mothers are just as important to any nation as fathers, if not more important; that my body is as important as my mind and spirit; and that I have independence of thought and life. In other words, I have learned to love my God with all my heart, with all my soul, and with all my mind, and to love my neighbour as myself.



# Christ's Unique Contribution to Humanity

By GNANAMANI SOLOMON

IN the little village of my boyhood, three miles away from all traces of town-life, there is a fairly prosperous community, mostly made up of Hindus and Mohammedans. Hundreds of boys grow up in that community, and only about a dozen come from Christian homes. Because they are so few, and because in the life of boys religious differences do not stand in the way of physical and social mingling, one would not expect to discern any distinction between the Christian and the non-Christian. But Government Inspectors and other visitors are invariably right when they point to certain boys and ask them if they are not Christians. It is the more astonishing since there is a complete absence of such hints as caste-marks. When I visited the village school about two years ago, the teacher asked me how I was able to recognize the Christian boys; and I replied that there was an almost unmistakable gleam of bright hope reflected through their eyes. Now, this might seem dogmatic, but the fact remains that there is something in Christ which kindles a hope and inspires an enthusiasm in the breasts of all who sincerely acknowledge His mastery.

## **"Eternal Life in the Midst of Time"**

The importance of hope in human life is next only to that of faith. Hinduism, through its central doctrine of Karma and Transmigration, enjoins on its followers to seek their goal and their hope in the life beyond. This world and the present life are regarded as a hopeless maze of inextricable entanglements, and the Hindu is exhorted to escape being caught therein. But as Harnack says, "The Christian religion is a sublime and simple thing: eternal life in the midst of time, by the strength and under the eyes of God." Eternal life as taught in the New Testament is not just a future life everlasting, but begins in the present life. The one sure way to have eternal life "more abundantly" hereafter is to have it actually here and now; and Jesus teaches that the soul possessed by Christian faith already has eternal life and is a member of the Kingdom of God.

Because the Christian's hope is thus centred not only on the

future but also equally on the present, he is enjoined to regulate his present life with reference to his future hope. "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man", and in doing so He has shown an unparalleled example to the whole human race for all time to come. The properly balanced development of body, mind, and spirit is the inescapable duty of every man, and only as he so rounds out his own personality, can he hope to attain the unseen bliss of the future.

### **To Give It More Abundantly**

Jesus came to give life and give it more abundantly. The standard which He set for Himself has never yet been surpassed in the whole history of humanity. The method He adopted to reach that ideal is the method of unselfish and self-sacrificing service which He displayed with such unprecedented spirit in the Cross of Calvary. And that Cross, since then, has become the immortal symbol of the only way whereby a fuller and a more abundant life can be brought within the reach of all mankind; men and women of all races and creeds are to-day turning to the Man of the Cross for guidance in the perplexities of the modern world.

Sadhu Sundar Singh, that marvel of Christianity in India, is demonstrating that this ideal is sufficient to instil a compelling purpose in human life, and that the Author of this ideal furnishes the dynamic required to accomplish that purpose. Mahatma Gandhi, the man who has been pronounced as the greatest living leader, has found in this ideal the only satisfying standard for his life; he has repeatedly acknowledged his indebtedness for it to the Christ of the Cross. Because of the same ideal the Scotchman, Dr. Paton, and the Indian, Dr. Jesudhasan, after receiving their medical degrees in the University of Edinburgh, have decided to retire to the remote village of Tripatur in South India, where they are fulfilling the mission of Him who came to give the more abundant life to the struggling mass of humanity. When Jane Addams of Chicago consecrates her brilliant intellect and her amazing organizing powers to the enrichment of life in the slums, she too is following in the footsteps of this greatest Lover of humanity. This, then, is the most unique contribution of Christ to the human race,—that the realization of the hope of an abundant life even in this present world is within the reach of all.



# Christ in India

By STEPHEN G. KRISHNAYYA

WHAT is it that Christ has to give India? His most outstanding contribution is His life and example. He has no equal, for, whereas other founders of religions are known for their exemplifying one virtue or another, Jesus seems to embody them all. It is hard to resist the conclusion that God must be like Jesus. In fact so evident is this that the Hindus would fain include Him in their pantheon, and the Moslems do not hesitate to call Him prophet. As a personal ideal there is none higher, or more challenging.

## Christ's Teachings Respected by Non-Christians

Mahatma Gandhi has done not a little to turn men's eyes to Christ and the Cross. In him they see the spirit of Christ manifest. They hear the gospel of love and meekness preached once again in a world of hate and arrogance. The Cross becomes more intelligible as men learn of his self-sacrifice and vicarious suffering. Christ's teachings are beginning to be regarded and applied, even by non-Christians, as the highest standards of conduct. There is perceptible to-day, in India, what has been well called "a mass movement in mind" toward Jesus' ideals. The stress on the ethical aspect of life and religion is another of His contributions. The Fatherhood of God is likewise regarded as fundamental.

## The Christian Urge to Serve

The followers of this Man of Galilee, who "went about doing good," feel the urge to serve their fellow men. Hospitals, asylums, schools, and other philanthropic institutions are established to attend to the needy, the diseased, and the unfortunate. Noble men and godly women leave their homes and loved ones to go to foreign lands to work in the Master's spirit with those less fortunate than themselves. Whenever Christ has been taken seriously, it has meant some reform of a larger circle, and the attempt to remedy industrial, economic, national, and international wrongs.

**When There Is Neither East nor West**

But Christ is not always taken seriously, and people calling themselves by His name often betray Him in their lives, individual and national. One is sometimes tempted to feel that it is unfortunate for the cause of Christ in non-Christian lands, that His name should have been associated with the West. The average Oriental is just beginning to see that his is not the only "heathen" land in existence, and Oriental students educated in the West find little reason to contradict him.

What then is the conclusion? An attitude of condescension, "a superiority complex"—racial or religious—is out of place. If once men began to regard the world as non-Christian, would they not be at least as willing to invite missionaries from the Orient as they seem to be to send them? Would they not examine the vast "unoccupied areas" in every sphere of human activity and in every land? Would it not involve a recognition that the Churches of Christ in the so-called Christian lands have as important a task—if not more, because of their influence—as their representatives have in the East. The world needs Jesus. India needs Jesus, but "the Jesus of the Indian road." With this renewed sense of responsibility we may turn to Him who is our hope, our strength, our all, praying that He may give us grace to work that this world may become more self-evidently God's own. Then shall be realized for every land that glorious dream of the Indian poet, Tagore:

"Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;  
Where knowledge is free;  
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by  
narrow domestic walls;  
Where words come out from the depth of truth;  
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;  
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the  
dreary desert sand of dead habit;  
Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever-widening  
thought and action—  
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake."



# A Unique Personality

By DAN SINGH

"I am the light." (John VIII:12)

"Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden." (Matthew XI:28)

As an Oriental, loving quiet and meditation, I cannot help feeling that in the West, the soul of Christ is fettered within the walls of the Church, that "church-ianity" has taken the place of Christianity, that over-organization has crushed the spirit of man, who has been the less Christian in consequence. But these shortcomings are not a part of the teachings of Christ. We must have patience and willingness to look beneath the surface of the unholy wedding of Western civilization with Christianity and to judge aright the value and significance of the teachings of the Nazarene. As Rajah Ram Mohan Roy said:

"The consequence of my long and uninterrupted researches into religious truth has been that I have found the doctrines of Christ more conducive to moral principles and better adapted for the use of rational beings, than any others which have come to my knowledge."

In the preface to "Principles of Jesus: the Guide to Peace and Happiness," he says:

"This simple code of religion and morality is so admirably calculated to elevate men's ideas to high and liberal notions of one God—and is also [so] well-fitted to regulate the conduct of the human race in the discharge of their various duties to God, to themselves, and to society that I cannot but hope the best effect from its promulgation in the present form."

These words of the Maker of Modern India can hardly be improved.

## The Beautiful and Ever-pleasing Personality of Christ

The glory of Jesus lies not alone in the sublimity of His teachings: it is found also in the beautiful and ever-pleasing personality of the Christ that holds us spell-bound. The unfailing fountain of grace, the constant source of inspiration, Jesus presents an

exemplary character whose regenerative powers are beyond dispute. We may not merely reverence Him but we may—and we should—tread in His footsteps and let the spirit of God work through us toward the attainment of His divine ends.

By the helpful touch of His living personality, Jesus awakens in men hope and trust in the Almighty who cherishes only a desire to pardon the repentant. This is the effect of Jesus' influence both in the past and in the present. He causes sins to be forgiven by awakening in men the spirit of repentance. From this standpoint, His supreme value for to-day lies in our knowing and appreciating the real character of His earthly life.

The thing that is to me so touching and beautiful about Christ is His personality and sublime character. The exalted teachings of Christianity are practically all to be found in Hinduism—and indeed, Hinduism has a more profound philosophic approach to man's relations with himself, his fellows, and God than has Western Christianity. Nevertheless I came within the Christian fold—not because of its teachings so much as because of its central core, namely, the personality and character of the Saviour, an element that is wanting in Hinduism.

### **The Influence of Jesus upon Human Life**

The task of describing the character of Christ is not easy. Jesus is one of the most real and life-like figures of history: there is a way of observing, feeling, and judging which is unmistakably Christ-like. Those who have found in Him their inspiration have risen to heights of extraordinary sanctity, graciousness, and power; in them there has died away all sense of conflict between their own interests and those of their fellows; and with a greatness of heart growing very like that of Jesus, they have learned to identify their "self" with humanity. The influence of Jesus upon all those souls with their re-action upon their times must therefore be taken into account in any attempt to estimate the significance of Jesus to the world. The passion which Jesus seeks to arouse is pre-eminently not a thirst for personal holiness alone, but a thirst for the highest well-being of the human race—a profound sense of fellowship binding men in one big brotherhood, and seeking the common good collectively and socially.

His influence has penetrated far beyond the pale of the Church



which bears His name. A common modern idea of God, held by many who acknowledge no particular authority in Jesus, has been built of materials contributed by Him. There had been those before Him in the Gentile world who taught monotheism; but it was without assurance as to the possibility of conscious relationship between man and God: the crowning glory of Jesus is that He gave to the world a monotheistic conception of the Almighty with whom we can come in personal relationship through Him as our mediator.

## Why I Chose Christianity

By TAKUO MATSUMOTO

THE religious situation in Japan is well illustrated by a painting which represents as its central figure a child standing bewildered as four men beckon it to follow. The child symbolizes Japan and the four men stand for a Shintoist, Confucius, Buddha, and Jesus.

### Shinto and Confucianism

Of the religions represented by these men, Shinto and Confucianism cannot expect serious attention from the present-day youth. Shinto is in the last analysis nothing but a survival of nature- and ancestor-worship. To be sure, there has been an attempt on the part of certain Shintoists to rationalize it and to give it a semblance of a system of thought, but the most they could do would be to make it a means by which to arouse the feeling of patriotism and nationalism. Confucianism is a system of ethics which is patriarchal in origin and character. It has indeed done much good to the Japanese people and produced many a strong leader in the past; but in this new age of the changed conditions of life and society it is hardly able to inspire young people with its static ethics and formal injunctions.

### The Chief Assets of Buddhism

It is Buddhism only of all the older religions in Japan that really deserves our consideration as a possible religion for the

new generation. Not only has Buddhism had a great history behind it, but it is also keeping abreast of the times and carrying on vigorous missionary propaganda in a conscious and deliberate rivalry with the newly introduced Christianity. The great personality of its founder, its remarkable teaching of salvation by faith, its profound sense of human sympathy, its great organization, and its hold upon the masses of people, are among the big assets of this great religion.

### **The Buddhist Doctrine of Salvation**

The charm of the personality of Gautama Buddha, his deep spirituality, his sympathy with suffering humanity, and his utterly unselfish devotion and service cannot but impress us profoundly. In fact, to-day a new emphasis is being laid upon Buddha's personality as vital to the religion founded by him. The progressive Buddhist scholars nowadays speak of "the indwelling Buddha", "Buddha the embodiment of the Buddhist ideals" or "the perfection of character in Buddha". Then, the Buddhist doctrine of salvation by faith as inculcated by the Shin sect is truly remarkable. It teaches that Amida voluntarily gave up the supreme Buddhahood out of pity for suffering humanity, and through his self-imposed sufferings on behalf of the latter saves them from sin and misery, and that we must abandon all thought of self-reliance, but put our simple trust on Amida. The late Buddhist priest Kiyozawa significantly remarked: "My hope and the world's hope are to be found only in Amida's suffering love, that is, faith in the suffering Saviour."

### **The Adaptability of Buddhism**

Again, Buddhism has shown its adaptability to new situations: it has organized many institutions for social service and adopted new educational methods, such as Sunday Schools and Boy Scouts, even going to the extent of borrowing Christian hymns bodily and using organs in the temples. There has arisen, also, what may be called Neo-Buddhism, which has derived its inspiration from Jesus quite as much as from Gautama and which interprets its teachings in a way acceptable to the new generation. Besides these attractive features, Buddhism possesses a fine sense of reality of the spiritual, of artistic taste, and of repose and

contemplation, all of which are sorely needed in this age of coarse materialism, cheap taste, and easy excitability. Buddhism is surely one of the noblest expressions of the religious aspirations of humanity. It is easily the most influential religion in Japan with a total membership of over 30,000,000, that is, one-half of the whole population of the country.

### **Reasons for Rejecting Buddhism**

#### **1. It is Fundamentally Negative**

Buddhism is fundamentally negative. It is a way of escape from the evil world, and does not give us power to grapple with the evil nor inspire in us the positive spirit of love. It simply inculcates the negative sense of pity for the fellow-sufferers. How different is the Gospel of Jesus who came "that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly," and who proclaimed "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." His religion is positive, vital, and constructive. It appeals to the will and the conscience, and offers us a vision of a new world as well as moral power with which to realize it.

#### **2. It has little social appeal**

This last thought leads me to the discovery of another defect of the Buddhist religion. It has little social appeal. It is not the redemption of life, but from life, that Buddhism teaches. This is only a natural consequence of its fatalistic conception. In view of this Buddhistic conception, all the social and educational activities which Buddhism is trying to carry on nowadays must be regarded as something other than a spontaneous expression of its inner life. As a matter of plain fact, most of them are frankly slavish imitations of the Christian methods. It must be said that Christianity, with its splendid vision and programme of the Kingdom of God, has a far more vital message to this age of social and international relationships.

#### **3. It lacks the sense of personality**

Buddhism lacks the sense of personality. For Buddhism, man is "a momentary wave upon the ocean of the eternal oneness". Its whole philosophy is practically that of impersonal pantheism. The personality of Buddha is being emphasized nowadays, it is



true, but the whole development of Buddhism has had little to do with it. But Christianity is simply inseparable from the personality of its founder, is derived from and based upon Jesus Christ Himself. Christianity emphasizes the supreme value of man, who is indeed the child of God, the object of His loving care.

#### **4. It lacks a firm historical foundation**

One of the greatest weaknesses of Buddhism is that it lacks a firm historical foundation. Its wonderful doctrine of the suffering Amida and of salvation by faith in him only causes us a shock of utter disillusionment, once it is realized that it is nothing but "a device", and not at all based upon a fact. And then, the whole structure of Buddhism would totter if it were to return to the original teachings of its founder, for it is the result of speculation and religious imagination, and of the development of ideas fundamentally contrary to those of Buddha. Christianity, on the other hand, is based upon the undoubted historical facts of the life and death of Jesus, and the course of its development, however wavering and deviating it may at times have been, has ultimately been determined by reference to the spirit and teachings of Jesus.

#### **5. It has no adequate conception of God**

Lastly, Buddhism offers us no adequate conception of God. Buddha himself gave us no idea of God, and the whole system of Buddhism as developed since has not succeeded in presenting to us a clear idea of God. Much spirituality Buddhism surely has, but it lacks the centre and source of vital religious devotion. What a contrast to the Christian conception of the Heavenly Father with whom we as His children can have a loving and intimate fellowship, and who "so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life"!

For these reasons and others, I have no hesitation in being a follower of Jesus of Nazareth. It is true that Christianity as it is expressed and practised in the life and thought of the so-called Christian nations is far from what it ought to be. Perhaps Harnack was right when he referred to the Japanese as possible

pathfinders who would show the world for the first time what was really involved in the Gospel. But there is no doubt that Christianity in its highest and purest form has been a blessing to the peoples to whom it was introduced, and will continue to be so. It "fulfills" all the high aspirations expressed in Buddhism and other religions.

Ultimately, the supreme question to-day is not the choice between Christianity and Buddhism, but the conflict between idealism and materialism. And I am a Christian because I believe Christianity is the only adequate expression of vital idealism which will help us overcome the menace of materialism and build up a very Kingdom of God on earth.

## Jesus Christ as I Found Him

By MISS MATSUYO TAKIZAWA

BEFORE I became a Christian, I had been constantly looking for a person whose career might be my ideal. Once I wanted to be like my mother, ever so unselfish and so loving, but to think of being a simple housewife who must acknowledge her husband's will as the law became unbearable to me. My father disciplined me to be loyal to the Mikado, but never did I consider his life as my ideal. I was rather sorry for him, for he must be attended and, dignity being the precept of his life, any spontaneous act seems to be forbidden. To lead a life of contemplation detached from worldly things like a Buddhist nun was attractive at times when I was mystically inclined, but if I were to live in a mountain convent all the rest of my life I should be terribly lonesome and tired! I admired and still admire Confucius, but the content of his teaching was nothing but ethical codes. Oh, for an example of a life that I might pattern my own after, that I might die for! Thus I groped in the darkness until I was touched by the personality of Jesus.

### I Find My Exemplar

As I followed Jesus' life through the Bible, I grew stronger and stronger in my conviction that Jesus was the very person I had been seeking to be like and to devote myself to. I came to

like Jesus better than any other person in world history. I like Him first because, unlike all other founders of religions, He never slighted women; He never said to women that they could not do this or that because they were women. I had been resenting in my heart the Japanese teaching that woman should hold on to the three stages of obedience: that is, obedience to her parents in her girlhood, obedience to her husband in her womanhood, and obedience to her son in her declining age. It was, therefore, a great and stimulating joy to find Jesus as friend of women as well as of men. This alone was enough to lead me to decide to follow Him!

But here is another reason. That is, I like Jesus' way of living. His personal life was so simple and yet so full! He ate His food with gratitude, whether it be at His friends' or on the wayside, and He never worried about what to wear or where to sleep, believing in God, who would provide for His needs. He was ever ready to help others. He forgot His hunger and fatigue in His desire to feed and to give rest and comfort to others. He enjoyed company, even went to a wedding party, and He loved children. His conversation was so simple and yet so meaningful that even the fishermen and the prostitutes could understand and found a new life through their association with Him. On the other hand, He was very fond of going into the mountain sometimes to be alone with God in the bosom of Nature. He watched the lilies of the field and the birds of the sky and glorified God for His eternal care of the universe. Thus I found in Jesus social and mystic strains so beautifully and spontaneously blended with each other that I came to aspire to be like Him.

Then last and most of all, I adore Jesus for the prophetic qualities of His life. To hear Jesus speaking fearlessly against the privileged classes of Judæa was a new revelation to me, who had been taught to show utmost and unquestioning reverence to the existing authorities. Jesus looked down upon those who coveted high positions and who oppressed the masses; He declared that they were doomed to perish if they did not repent; and He exalted those who were persecuted for righteousness' sake as the only people worthy of the Kingdom. Such a man of courage and integrity had I never seen before! Moreover I discovered that His indictments were neither destructive nor seditious, but He



tried to turn the standard of value upside down in order to bring about a new social order, which He called the Kingdom of Heaven. He had a vision of a new world where every individual should count just as much as any other individual and where everybody could develop his faculties to the fullest measure. He would not stop preaching this gospel, and finally He died for it.

How I want to be like Jesus, so sublimely courageous, so entirely free from all the fetters of the world, and so divinely eager to emancipate all humanity! Ancestor worship will never give me a vision of a new life. Enlightenment of Buddhism may free me from all worldly cares and ambitions but will never give me the nerve to throw myself in the midst of the world like a dynamo in order to become an impelling force to create a new world where the strong cannot exploit the weak but growth is guaranteed to each and every human being. Jesus alone, therefore, is my ideal of life. By following His footsteps and dying for Him, I can not only enrich my personal life but also find the true meaning of my existence in human society.

## The Uniqueness of Christianity

By TETSUTARO ARIGA

I had never belonged to any religious body before I became a Christian when I was about to graduate from a middle school in Tokyo. I might have become a Buddhist, had I not had a Christian church in the neighbourhood of my home. But as I reflect on my past, I am thankful that I became a Christian, for I believe Christianity alone can satisfy the needs of my soul.

Although I have had no personal experience in any other religion than my own, I cannot disregard the historic and social background from which my existence sprung. I never had any rest when I could not find some reason or other for being a Christian. After years of theological study pursued always with this interest, I have reached a kind of solution, which I think will make a basis on which the further fabric of my thought will be built.

Perhaps it is a mistake to think Christianity has certain elements

which other religions lack. It is customarily said that Buddhism has no idea of God. Nevertheless the Buddhistic conception of "the void" is nothing negative. It is to be rightly included within the category of the experience of the divine. Nor is Buddhism destitute of high moral standards and stimuli. Christianity, moreover, in its historic development shares many defects and shortcomings with other religions. We shall never be justified in comparing the best of our religion with the worst of others.

### **The Uniqueness of Christianity Lies in Its Emphases**

Where, then, does the uniqueness of Christianity lie? Certainly not in this or that element it possesses. Its incomparable character is rather to be found in the way in which these elements are put together or in which certain emphases are made.

In our human experience of the divine there are two possible modes. We may have a direct mystic communion with it or we may hear the voice of God in our conscience and its moral demands. Nearly every religion teaches these two ways. But it is only in the religion of Jesus that they are perfectly unified and harmonized. In Buddhism moral discipline is more or less a means to the ultimate goal of mystic redemption. It is therefore not accidental that the Buddhists often forget the ethical side of their religion. Confucianistic thought, on the other hand, altogether lacks the dynamic power of mystic experience. It very easily tends to be barren formalism and institutionalism. But when we come to Jesus, we find Him at once mystical and ethical. His experience of the Heavenly Father is indeed unique in the history of religion. Jesus loved to commune with Him in a quiet place, and there found inexhaustible resources, wonderful ethical insight and power.

### **The Idea of Democratization**

The idea of democratization furnishes another test of Christianity. By democracy I mean here simply the principle of co-operation as distinguished from autocratic control of others and from the indifference of individualism. Some religions are more autocratic than others in their colour, while there are certain religions which are purely individualistic, and still others which are more or less co-operative. Perhaps these three types are

discernible in any historic religion. Even Christianity has had in its history many autocrats as well as many individualists. But it is undeniable that Christianity as the gospel of love stands for the principle of co-operation. And this is where Christianity has its unique strength. As the Buddhistic conception of salvation presupposes some particular faculty of religious insight, some people will ever be excluded and democracy will never be complete. Confucianism, on the other hand, subjects the individual to a certain fixed social order and therefore makes progress almost impossible. Christianity alone recognizes fully the infinite value of the individual and the free co-operation of free individuals. Thus it alone is rightly qualified for the great task of establishing the Kingdom of God on earth!

## I Believe in Christianity

By R. H. A.

I was born in Japan and brought up in a Buddhist home. In the family code were also incorporated the Shinto principles and ceremonial rites. When I was still a small child I was taught to appreciate the writings of Confucius. In my early childhood days my life was saved in the course of a pilgrimage with my parents by Kobo-Daishi, one of Japan's early Buddhist priests. Every year I went on a round of pilgrimage through *hachijiu-hakkasho* (eighty-eight sacred places) as a part of my religious life. With this background of crowded Oriental religious experiences I came to America when I was thirteen years old.

### A Japanese Boy's Dreams of America

There were several things in my mind at that time when I crossed the Pacific Ocean. My parents had preceded me by four years and, in their absence, I had ever longed for the mother's warm heart and for home life. Then also America was a mystically great country, to my childish mind, and the very fact of going there was a privilege which my friends could not enjoy. I aspired to a Western education, which would place me above their level. I even thought that I might make a fortune. I was then also be-



ginning to look for a definite religious conviction out of the complicated system of religio-ethical ideas taught at home.

Upon my arrival in America, however, I found that I had been merely building castles in the air. The home life I did not find, though my mother was all that a mother can be to her son. My father drank and gambled, and the home was not a fit place for an aspiring young soul. I found the English language extremely difficult and I had to devote all my energies to acquiring it. Then arose the anti-Japanese school question in San Francisco, by which my young mind was profoundly depressed. I was completely disappointed and at sea. In addition I had to work as a "school boy" and submit to the life of a servant, which was both disheartening and humiliating.

### Conversion

Nevertheless, a greater hand was guiding me and I saw a brighter ray behind these dark clouds. Soon after my arrival, I received an entirely new start at one of the Japanese Christian missions where I began to learn the English language. There I first came into contact with Christianity and the Christian way of life. As I learned the elementary facts in the teachings of Jesus, all my training in the religious beliefs and superstitions of the Orient came to seem more and more hollow, and one day, two years after my arrival in America, I accepted Jesus as my new Master and was—against the wishes of my parents—baptized. Inner light began to burn, even the work of a "school boy" began to appear as an incentive, church activities began to appeal to me as a privilege and a character-building service, and my effort to obtain an education began to bear a new meaning: I was completely converted and became an optimistic child, even though the same discouraging environmental conditions continued. And my prayers and optimistic efforts began to bear fruit. At the end of three years my mother became a Christian; two years later my father, my uncle, and my aunt; and our family atmosphere was completely changed.

### Three Problems

Yet three problems still confronted me: that of working my way, that of perfecting my education through the difficult English

language, and that of continuing in the Christian faith and taking part in church activities. For one thing, the anti-Japanese feeling in California discouraged me and I began to question the Christianity of the West. But I wanted to keep up with all these three things in order to demonstrate to my friends what a Christian can do. In the effort my health finally gave way and in my junior year at a local high school I found myself in sick bed from "over-work". Doctors all advised me to give up two of "the three things" for the sake of my health. But which two should I give up if I were to follow that advice? Self-support, education, or Christianity?

### **An Unforgettable Struggle**

Then followed that unforgettable struggle which determined my future career. After a series of mental conflicts in which prayers figured very largely, I found myself at the end of every trail; I was even unable to think things through clearly; my Christianity could not give me light, nor did any other religions of the Orient. It was in this desperate condition that, after midnight during one of those beautiful autumnal nights in California, I strayed out of my room and almost unconsciously went to the sea shore. Seated underneath the gorgeous growth of eucalyptus trees and looking over the silent water, I prayed for guidance and tried to think the way out, thought and prayed, over and over. But there was no light. The idea even occurred to me of throwing myself into the stillness of the water in front of me and terminating all these mental and spiritual agonies. I continued to pray and to think. If Jacob wrestled with God in the old days, I believe that I wrestled with Him that night. And the struggle suddenly took a new turn and I began to hear a clear voice whispering into my inner ears. Never before have I heard a clearer and more impressive voice.

"No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." Yes, I had taken up the cross against the will of my parents and had gone so far as to lead them into the same faith; and now I was looking back, my hand still on the plough. Oh, I must look forward and plough; mine must be visions not dreams. My Christianity must be an opti-

mistic, positive, forward-looking, and aggressive religion; my Christianity must be the religion of Hope.

"Knowledge puffeth up, but love edifieth." Yes, I must go forth with education and achieve great things in the academic field, but I must not forget that it is love that edifies personal character and, after all, it is personality, not education, that counts. Character based upon strong religious conviction, first, and education, second. My Christianity must be the religion of personality and love.

"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Yes, if Paul did everything with that faith, why could I not do the same things with the same faith? Why could I not "glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me" and my power be made perfect thereby? My Christianity must be the religion of faith and service.

These old, old words brought new visions into my bewildered mind that evening when I wrestled with God; they brought home a new strength. Ever since that evening Christianity has been an inseparable part of my life. I went through with my education until I had finished my work for the doctorate and it was a joy to struggle; I was identified continuously with Christian activities and it was a comfort to serve; all these years I worked to the limit that my health permitted and it was an inspiration to work, the strength ever springing from Him, not from my physical self.

### **Why I Still Believe in Christianity**

I still believe in Christianity because it is the only religion which has helped and saved me in the most critical moments of my life. To me, therefore, Christianity is not a set of theological doctrines: it is the religion of living power and of living personality and of living service.



# What Christ Has to Give to a Moslem

By M. M. ISMAIL

## 1. A Higher Conception of God

A Moslem believes in God just as a Christian does; but his idea of God is quite different from that of a Christian. According to the Moslem idea, He is eternal, holy, and just; but at the same time, as the Koran says, "He can do everything imaginable." He may show favour to the wicked and cast the righteous out into eternal darkness. He may lead people to do wickedness of all sorts and then punish them. He is an absolute being, who does not, necessarily, always do good; but whatever He does must be considered good.

When a Moslem comes into personal contact with Christ, his idea of God is changed: he begins to see and understand the holiness of God. In Christ, the true revelation of God, he comes face to face with the divine glory and learns that Almighty God cannot be the author of evil. He cannot do and will never do anything against His holy nature.

## 2. A Nobler Idea of Salvation

In the same way the Moslem agrees with the Christian in believing and saying that man has sinned and is under the wrath of God and therefore he must seek salvation; but, here again, the Moslem idea of salvation is very low. It only means escape from punishment and permission to enjoy the physical, sensual pleasures of Paradise. The Moslem salvation is no salvation at all, for it has absolutely no idea of the change of heart and the rooting out of sin. Consequently Moslem salvation is all external. It is purely human or man-made, for independently of divine revelation man can never aim higher than this.

The Christian idea of salvation is the only true idea. Christ says, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." What is salvation without this divine vision? As long as a man's heart is impure he cannot see God, and man cannot make his heart pure by his own efforts. It is only by the power of God, through Jesus Christ, that man can conquer sin and become pure in heart. It is not alone the teaching of Christ: millions of men

and women have conquered sin by the power of God, through Christ, and they bear testimony to the fact that Christ receives sinful men and women and gives them power to conquer sin and to become pure in heart and worthy of the presence of God. This is true salvation; freedom from sin and fear of punishment or any desire for the pleasures of the Moslem Paradise.

### 3. Assurance of Salvation

The Moslem, with all his faith in the mercy of his God and the intercession of his prophet, is never sure of his end: for in spite of his piety, his God may choose to throw him into hell forever. His God is not moral, and consequently he cannot be certain of his end and can have no peace of mind. But through Christ, the revelation of God, the Christian knows his God is moral and faithful and therefore he can trust in Him. All this assurance comes through Christ whose teachings and example are inseparable. The Moslem has nothing of the sort in Islam.

Alas! the prophet of Islam promised a filthy paradise to his followers, after death, and made one for himself here on earth. He could not have been sure of the promised one! These considerations shook my faith in Islam and I became extremely restless and lost all peace of mind till I found rest and peace in Christ, who says, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

## Christianity, Not Mohammedanism, for Me

By SYLVESTER BRODERICK

THOUGH I never was a Mohammedan, the findings that follow are based upon a number of years of careful observation and continued study of Mohammedanism. It may be stated further that these comments are naturally more or less personal, coming out of the heart of one who has lived nearly all his life in a country where Paganism and Mohammedanism are quite common, but where Christianity has made marked progress in the relatively short time that it has existed there.

### Love versus the Sword

In contrasting the religion of Christ with that of Mohammed one cannot help noticing the great chasm that divides the two: the one a religion of love, born from above, incarnated in the great personality of Jesus Christ; the other a religion of the sword, born of this world, propagated by a human being, Mohammed. The essence of Christianity is love and service to all men, to men of all colours and in all lands. This has been exemplified by Christ Himself and made practical by the early disciples and apostles. Is the motive underlying Mohammedanism love and service for all, or is it the desire to conquer for the sake of conquering?

Unlike Christianity, Mohammedanism is formal rather than practical, degrading instead of uplifting, superficial rather than vital. One of the outstanding characteristics in its history is the manner in which converts are made, not by conviction but by compulsion: fear not love is the predominant motive.

### Christianity Practical and Adaptable

Christianity, however, has always been made practical and adaptable. It fits the highest spots in civilization as well as the most backward area of the earth's surface. It has an appeal both for the intellectual and for the ignorant. It knows no bounds as to race or colour. It is a universal religion. While Mohammedanism might claim universality, it does not appeal to the majority of educated people. In theory and practice its principles are allied with paganism. For a heathen to become a member of the Mohammedan faith does not necessarily mean that he should give up any or all of his old customs and practices: he simply wears the religious garb over his paganism. He is then the possessor and not the convert of a religion. He is more or less a victim of circumstances over which he exercises no control.

### Equality of the Sexes

The principles that Jesus Himself set forth cannot be counter-balanced by the teachings of Mohammed. Mohammed placed value on the life of slavery and self-aggrandizement. He did not advocate freedom from superstition or vice. In the home



that he set up, the wife had no place but that of a domestic servant. Faithfulness is optional rather than a virtue. Polygamy is preferred to monogamy. Undoubtedly the high ideals which Christianity has fostered are the means toward sex equality.

### **Selfishness Swallowed Up in Selfhood**

Another great principle in the teachings of Jesus is "selfishness swallowed up in selfhood." The desire to find oneself is far greater than the desire to distinguish oneself. How do I fit in this great universe? What is my mission? are the questions of a true Christian. How can I distinguish myself and become popular? is the most urgent query of the ardent Mohammedan. The spirit of unselfish living which Jesus exemplified cannot be separated from the ideals of Christianity. "He that is greatest among you shall be your servant." This is the direct command from the lips of Christ. On the contrary, Mohammed would say: "He that is greatest, let him be served." Out of this spirit of service Christian institutions have sprung up, such as churches, schools and colleges, and hospitals. Men have risked their lives in foreign fields; generation after generation has been blessed.

### **What Christ Has to Offer**

If I were to be asked to state briefly but concisely why I am a Christian, I would say without hesitation, Because of the things Christ has to offer. These are:

#### **1. Abundant Life**

"I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly." This means a great deal to me. What kind of life—mental, moral, physical, or spiritual? Not any one of these by itself but all put together.

#### **2. Salvation Through Him**

"For there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." To be sure, Mohammed was a great man but Christ was infinitely greater. Mohammed established principles; Christ wrought miracles and transformed lives. Mohammed's religion is in a book; Christ's religion is in the heart and life of the individual.

# From Moslem to Christian

By H. H. FIKRET

I consider it a sacred privilege to have this opportunity to witness openly for Jesus Christ. To my humble way of thinking there are only two ways of looking upon Jesus:—Jesus Christ is either the Master of men, the Lord of life, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world, and all that the prophet proclaimed the Messiah to be—Wonderful, Counsellor, Prince of Peace—or He is the greatest impostor that ever walked the earth. To a believer, to one who is endeavouring to follow Jesus in this life, He is all that Isaiah said and more than mortal tongue can speak or human mind can think.

The story of how a boy, born of Mohammedan parents in the heart of the Near East, in the capital, at that time, of Islam, came to accept Jesus as his Saviour and Friend is a long one. Suffice it to state here some of the factors which played an important part in leading me to accept Christ's way of life.

## Factors in my Conversion to Christianity

I had gone through the Koran once under able leadership, and attended many services of worship in the large and small mosques. I had lived among good Mohammedans for many years, but had subsequently the privilege of mingling with the finest type of Christian people.

### 1. The Example Set by Individual Christians

One of the primary factors, therefore, was the example set by Christians: their every-day life, their general behaviour, their willingness to serve their fellow men regardless of race, nationality, or colour.

### 2. Systematic Reading of the Bible

Another factor was the systematic, habitual, and careful reading of the Bible. More than twenty years ago the good wife of a great missionary had a little school of a dozen boys and girls from good non-Christian families. During one hour a week she read with them the Bible, first the Old Testament and then the

New. The children learned some of the Psalms by heart and some of the sayings of Christ in the Gospels. And I bear witness here that this planting brought forth abundant fruit. I find great joy, peace, and inspiration in the Bible. I find rest and encouragement. I have never known the time when I have read the Bible without finding something new in it. I have yet to go to my Bible in hours of defeat and despair and discouragement and not find help in it. I can still say that the more I read my Bible the easier it is for me to believe that Christ cares for me, and the more do I enjoy the assurance of everlasting and abundant life in Him.

### **What Christ Has Meant to Me**

I have believed His promises, I have tried to believe them with a childlike, undoubting faith, and I have realized them. The more I have trusted in Him in everything, the more He has been able to do for me. I did not embrace Christianity without thought and long meditation. And I say without reserve that all that I have and all that I am, all that I do and all that I can do is Christ's. What I find in Him I have not been able to find elsewhere. He is all in all to me. He has helped me as a teacher in engineering, as a Sunday School teacher, and as a man. And I doubt not that He will help me to cast off everything that still keeps His spirit from me.

## **Confucius and Christ: a Personal Experience**

By Y. T. Wu

It was only after a few months' study of Christianity that I decided to become a Christian. But my decision followed ten years of searching and struggling, sometimes hopeful, sometimes full of pessimism, but always wrapped up in a mystery, the mystery of life and of the universe. I had studied the Confucian classics since boyhood, but they did not go to the root of my trouble; the Buddhistic teaching of renunciation has always appealed to me in my more pessimistic moods, but the sense of moral duty seemed to point to a more positive life of service. I made a



serious attempt to invent my own philosophy of life: "Do your duty and leave the rest to the unknown", I would say. But this, too, did not prove adequate to meet the real issues of life.

### **Formative Contacts with Christianity**

My first contact with Christianity was in a Summer Conference in 1911. There I drew the conclusion that Christianity was a good religion, invented to rule the mediocre, but destined to vanish with the advance of civilization. Nevertheless, I bought a copy of the Bible and, to be logical, I studied it from the Book of Genesis. I was impressed with nothing but absurdity and superstition, and I had to give it up. The first real impression made on me was by Dr. John R. Mott when he lectured to the students in Peking in 1913. His message was a call to the struggle for character. His stirring words still ring in my ears. Then four years later came the first great experience with the Master. Later in a Bible class I read for the first time the Sermon on the Mount. My heart was filled with joy. Again and again I turned to those three chapters of the Bible. Every word seemed to have been written for me. There stood before me a great character: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." He had captured me and I was not able to escape. I found in Him the things I had been searching for during the past ten years, and it only remained for Dr. Sherwood Eddy and Mr. Buchman to add to my conviction and to help me to make the immediate decision in 1918 for the Christian life.

### **Confucianism versus Christianity**

Let me now come back to Confucianism. Confucius expresses more nearly than any other sage in China the sum total of Chinese civilization, and for twenty-four centuries has guided, moulded, and held together the life, thought, and culture of the Chinese people as a race. As a complete and elaborate system of social ethics and personal culture, Confucianism has not been surpassed. Confucius was no doubt the greatest teacher in China. Despite recent severe criticism Confucianism has its permanent value. Confucius was the child of his age, and was subject to the conditions and limitations of his time. But the essence of his teachings holds good even when conditions are changed.

To account for the difference between the gospel of Confucius and the gospel of Christ we have first to compare the personality of the two teachers. While Confucius inspires respect and admiration, Jesus attracts men with an almost irresistible force, as a magnet attracts iron filings. Confucius had high ideals, but he was not sure that he had lived up to them. He had a keen sense of his own weakness. It was not so with Jesus. He had strong and clear convictions. He saw things so vividly that His words do not leave one with any doubt. His ideals were not fancies in the air, but incarnated in His very being. "The multitudes were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority." While Confucius pointed the way to his followers, Jesus leads His disciples as a good shepherd leads his sheep. In Jesus one finds understanding, sympathy, confidence, and friendship that transcends human relationships. When a man has really made His acquaintance, he cannot help calling Him Lord and Saviour.

Then again, Confucius, with all his wonderful understanding of human nature, did not touch the secret yearnings of the human heart or bring hope and power into the struggling lives of men. No doubt Confucius had a glimpse of the divine, but he did not feel that conscious and intimate relation with God which was characteristic of Jesus. It is through Jesus that we come into contact with the living God and have access to "the fountain of life". And it is this feeling of relation with God that gives the added value and power to the teachings of Jesus. What a sense of relief to be able to believe in a God who loves and cares and rules the universe! The mystery of life remains, but it no longer causes perplexity and despair. The Christian emerges with a new joy, a new faith, a new desire to serve, which come from a transforming experience.

Such are the characteristics of the two great leaders. They both taught men to live better and happier lives, and they would have been great friends, had they lived together at the same time. We call Jesus Lord, but that does not minimize our respect and love for Confucius, for it was God that touched the heart and opened the eyes of both these great souls.

# Why I Became a Christian

By MISS YI FANG WU

WHEN I first went to school the leading reformers and educators were trying to swing the people's attention to material development: the wonders of science and the material advancement that science had given the Western countries were greatly emphasized. We were brought up with the idea that religion is superstition and the intellectual should have nothing to do with gods or God. Then, in the little study of the classics that I made, we were taught the importance of personal character and the cardinal relationships among men, but the relation of men to God was nowhere mentioned. Confucius never maintained that he had divine revelation, and we worshipped him, not as a religious founder, but as a sage and philosopher. So, up to the time when I went to a missionary college, I had been practically an atheist.

## Science the First Factor Leading toward Conversion

There were two factors working together to lead me to Christ. The first came from without, that is, from my academic studies, especially when I happened to take biology and astronomy at the same time. Limitations in science and the wonders in nature made me pause and wonder whether there is not "a Law-Giver and a Life-Giver" in the universe. New discoveries in science, instead of enabling men to create things new, add to men's knowledge only a few more facts and laws that have existed and will exist forever. And specialists tell us that, in spite of the recent tremendous progress in science, there is in every line much still unknown and yet to be learned, and that all they are able to do is to make use of the facts and keep within the laws. My former worship of science was now shattered, and I was obliged to admit the existence of some Being outside of men's sphere and the physical world. From the study of the Christian religion, I came to know God as the Being, the Creator, the Law of all laws, and the Life of all lives.

## The Second Factor the Realization of Human Weakness

The second factor came from within. The realization of human weakness and the lack of a purpose in life led me to long for



power and light. We learn from Confucius what we should be as individuals and in the community. But he does not show us the way to attain this goal, and we only know we are to endeavour by our own effort. The scene is changed in the life of Jesus Christ. He had God in His life. This was the source of His power to serve, to suffer, and to triumph. He showed us the way; many earnest Christians had followed it; and I gladly surrendered to God and joined this number. From another side deep sorrow at the death of my parents and despair at the general turmoil worked together in awakening me to ask the question: "What, after all, is the meaning of life? Is there any purpose for life?" Again, I found the answer in the life of Jesus Christ. His interpretation of a loving Father changed the harsh cruel world into a loving brotherhood; His life of doing God's will to establish the Kingdom set a purpose for our lives, a goal to work for. I was led to see how even in this world of to-day His work is being continued by His true disciples, and how we all should join in this great task.

It has been frequently said lately that Christianity has no place in our country, but I am convinced that Christianity is what we need, and urgently need at this particular period. For it gives courage and power to all those who desire to live righteously and to serve willingly; it gives hope to those who struggle in an apparently hopeless condition for a better social order by faith in God. In our fight against militarism, government corruption, social evils, and personal selfishness, we need courage and power to carry out our convictions and strong faith to sustain us through disappointments. We have all these when we take Jesus Christ into our lives.

# The Distinctive Contribution of Jesus

By Y. P. MEI

IMMANUEL KANT observed that there are two kinds of religions, namely the favour-seeking religions and the moral religions. Of course, very few religious systems can be labelled as either the one or the other purely and simply. But even in religions where the moral note is the loudest its timbre yet shows a large variety. A few stress what one should have, and most of the rest emphasize what one should do, but, so far as I know, only the religion of Jesus persuasively and yet distinctly proclaims what one should be.

## Character the Distinctive Note

The distinctive contribution of Jesus, I take it, is His regard for character, or personality, as the supreme thing in life. This emphasis has come out of a real understanding of the nature of the eternal quest of man. For the Psalmist only played the spokesman of all races and for all times when he asked, "What is man?" As soon as he begins to reflect on matters beyond the range of mere subsistence, man is confronted with dozens of problems pressing for solution. Among them such problems as evil, immortality, and invisible realities are fundamental. But, I feel, the solution even of these problems depends, in the last analysis, on the answer to the question, "What is man?" Here is the answer from Jesus: "Of such is the Kingdom of God." Man partakes of the Divine; man is the potential son of God; that is, he has a potential divine character to achieve and realize.

Character is not only the distinctive but also the central note in the religion of Jesus. For Him character is the fundamental axiom: every other problem is to be viewed in its light. Life beyond does not mean passive amusement in an Elysium but a greater chance for the development of one's character. Evil is to be neither surrendered to nor neglected, but accepted as a means by which one shall rise higher in the scale of character.

## Jesus' Religion of Character Unique

Jesus' religion of character is unique. Other religions have

either overlooked the problem altogether or given very inadequate answers. The only other system of teaching that strikes me as running parallel with it is Confucianism. The Confucian doctrine of self-cultivation of the superior man with all its details and implications presents a close resemblance to Jesus' doctrine of character. And it is even more concrete and easily practicable in certain points. But there is one fundamental difference:—while Jesus presented a religion, Confucius propounded only a moral code. With Confucius there is no religious sanction, no consciousness of the Divine, while with Jesus these are of course vital.

### Character-Building through Relation to God

Finally, there is this vital point confronting us. With the religion of Jesus it is not that certain doctrines are preached or that certain emotional chords are struck. Rather it is, that we are face to face with a new kind of life and being, namely a character in the making in relation with God. This is the mission of Jesus: He came that man may have life and have it more abundantly. And He executed this mission by teaching, and, much more efficiently, by living: "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." His followers are not following an empty shadow, but a real being that has lived and struggled and achieved, just as they are living and struggling and hoping to achieve. If character is the distinctive note of the religion of Jesus, this consciousness of a Divine Father and the sight of an understanding Leader make its accompanying chord. And it is the beautiful harmony thereof that places the religion of Jesus head and shoulder above all other religions.

This is an age of sharp criticism. It has its value; it has its danger. Every Christian has to admit with shame that fantastic perversions have been wrought on the religion of Jesus. But perversions are perversions and the original is the original. When we look over the suffering world and try to work out a solution, we shall pretty soon find ourselves joining Thomas Carlyle and saying with him: "Get your man and all is got." What can be the motive of "your man" and what his urge, if it be not the religion of Jesus?



# Christianity from a Chinese Point of View

By HORATIO CHEN

CONFUCIANISM deals with a set of ethical principles. But it neither teaches nor does it pretend to teach anything of the world beyond our human existence. Indeed, when one of the disciples asked about the question, the master answered, "Having not known the living, thou wouldst not know the dead." The teachings of Confucius consist in a set of extremely fine principles; but so far as they face the ultimate life problem, they lack vigour and clarity. Confucianism never laid claim to being a religion in the sense of introducing the divine element.

Buddhism is an unusually fine and delicate religion. As its threads of thought spread through the most intricate phases of life, it has a great appeal for the intellectual type of mind. But in so far as it faces the present situation of the world, it lacks the active and aggressive spirit.

## The Most Valuable Factors in Christianity

Christianity in the best sense involves three things:

### 1. The Call to Action

In the first place, Christianity calls for an active participation in the solution of human problems. The darkest and deadliest corners are the holiest spots for Christian endeavour. "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them," serves as the watchword.

### 2. The Claim of Absolute Devotion

In the second place, it asks for absolute devotion to the divine spirit. No one can be more devoted than he who has given his life for others. The height of the Christian injunction is to "love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." When one has dedicated all that he has to God, what righteous undertaking dares he not to enter?

### 3. The Demand of Supreme Sacrifice

In the third place, Christianity exacts of its followers the most

profound kind of sacrifice. Whoever reads the sentence, "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister," knows the spirit of the Lord. Confucius once stated that there are only too few who can love virtue as a man would love a woman. When one's religious devotion reaches white heat, it is only natural that he give his life unreservedly. But it takes the greatest pain to attain to this point and the whole problem of living a religious life may resolve itself ultimately into this one problem.

### **The Four Tests of Christianity as a World Religion**

If Christianity is a true world religion, it must fulfill four requirements:

1. It must be competent to meet the problems of individual lives.
2. It must be adaptable to the conditions of the different races.
3. It must be competent to meet the problems of the human race.
4. It must be united within its kingdom.

The first point has in the main been already dealt with. It remains to consider the last three.

To me it is always a matter of regret that China has not adapted the Christian religion to her own needs. While Christianity remains everywhere the same, its practice needs to be adapted to local conditions. This necessitates revaluation, not upon the basis of what the West has accepted as Christianity but upon the basis of the Gospel itself.

In the third place, Christianity did not save the world from the recent war. Ever since that dreadful time, many have laid the blame upon the Christian religion, confusing the Westernized Christianity with the Christian religion itself. Perhaps the time will come when some of the peace-loving peoples will effectively bring to triumph the peace-perpetuating element in the Christian religion in order to recompense the West for what it has contributed in time past.

Lastly, while we serve one Master to establish one Kingdom, there is no reason for the people in the Kingdom to be divided among themselves. It has been a traditional emphasis in Con-

fucianism that different beliefs can survive side by side without enmity. When this spirit of toleration will have been infused into the Christian religion in China, the time will come when there will be only one sect, one denomination, and one Church, in China at least. The New China Church, which began its movement after the war, is certainly going in that direction. And may we thank God that Christianity in China will unite to uplift the 400,000,000 people in that still divided but ultimately to-be-united republic!

## From Confucianism to Christianity: a Personal Experience

By MISS SOONG MOY YONG

PERHAPS it may be interesting to know what influences actually brought about, five years ago, my conversion from the Confucianist to the Christian faith. Though reared in a Confucianist home, I had the rare privilege, denied to many a Chinese girl at that time, of receiving my English education at a Christian Girls' School in the Malay Peninsula—thanks to the broad-mindedness of my parents to whom I am deeply indebted. As I look back into those years, I cannot help feeling that it was providential that I joined a crowd eagerly listening to some missionaries singing hymns of praise. This led to a keen desire on my part to attend an English school, in order that I might obtain a knowledge of English.

### Religious Training in School

In addition to the daily routine of school work, the Bible was carefully taught. Since it was a mission school, the Bible was included in the curriculum. Naturally, the daily contact with the teachers coupled with the Bible study slowly but surely influenced my mind. Often girls, in groups of four, would meet together in a quiet room where we could pray for those who do not know our Saviour. On some Sunday mornings we attended the Chinese Christian service, and in the evenings, the young people's meetings, which we always heartily enjoyed. Taking such an interest

in religious activities as I did, it is not to be wondered that I considered myself a Christian even then. Not long after my graduation from High School, I asked my father's consent that I become a Christian. That consent, I rejoice to say, was granted without a moment's hesitation; and accordingly I was baptized in the church the following Sunday.

### Why Christianity Appeals to Me

During those nine years of schooling, I was constantly taught that "God is Love." He is that God with whom I can freely commune either in joy or in sorrow! On the other hand, Confucianism has not offered me that privilege of communion with God. As far as I can recollect, my father has never once mentioned anything about God to me. Occasionally, my Buddhist servants at home tried to make me believe in their gods by relating to me a dozen or more woeful tales. On several occasions I followed them to a Chinese Buddhist temple close by, just to find out what they were about. In the meantime, I looked around me, only to behold idols here and there, with terrible visages. When I was asked to bow down before them, I said, "I shall not bow to those wooden images." Thereupon, they frightened me by saying that the gods would punish me some day.

The blessed assurance given in the Bible, that eternal life is granted to those who believe in the Lord, appeals to me most of all. Every sinner who repents has as much of a chance of having eternal life as anybody else. Here Christ stands as our Mediator. What a comfort it is to know that we have Him to intercede for us!

The Christian faith is a source of courage, hope, and comfort, especially in time of sorrow. I am speaking now with reference to a personal experience. It was a year in March since my only brother, a boy of fourteen, passed away. The awful news did not reach me until almost two months after his death. Finally, one morning the postman handed me the letter from home, which I took along with me to my class. Eagerly I opened it, and read the first sentence. Immediately my thought flew back to the home which sorrow had recently visited. In my utter despair, I sat motionless in my seat, but kept praying inwardly to the merciful Heavenly Father for strength and guidance. What a struggle I



had in keeping back those tears! God answered my silent prayers, for I actually attended all my classes that morning, though my heart was breaking. Then, alone in my room, I knelt down and prayed that God might comfort my parents. Oh, if that boy had been spared to us, he would be coming to America or England for his college education. All I can do is to look up to God and say, "Father, thou knowest best." It is indeed comforting to know that I shall meet him some day.

In conclusion, I would like to add that the effort of the missionaries has not been in vain. Through them my life has been made richer and fuller. It is to be hoped that some day I may be able to win souls to my Lord and Master. "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few."

## My Impressions of Christianity

By MISS CHI CHE WANG

BROUGHT up in a family of no religious affiliations, and associated with people of several different religions, my early impressions of religion were very naturally based in the main upon my feelings toward the particular people who represented religions to me. On entering a mission school, however, I found myself among other pupils, all of good Chinese families, but of families that were rather skeptical of any religion, as was my own. We were probably, therefore, more critical than we might otherwise have been. Our first impressions were that Christianity was too empty and unattractive in form to appeal to us. Compulsory prayers were distasteful and we could not appreciate their value; neither were we enthusiastic about the severe restrictions on Sundays.

### Personality the Decisive Factor

But there was one factor in my environment which drew me toward Christianity. One teacher there was in the school who was entirely lovable, fair, and just, and she explained to me that the essence of Christianity lay not in this formalism, but rather in our personal relations and attitudes. It was through her influence that I decided that the Christian religion meant more to me than Buddhism or Taoism.

### **The Attitude of Jesus Appealing**

Buddhism seemed to me too highly impractical to have much value as a world religion, and Taoism based too largely upon superstition. As we studied the Bible, however, the attitude of Jesus appealed to me greatly. Modest and unassuming, He was always thoughtful of the welfare of others, and interested in those things which were unselfish and destined to bring about good results rather than bickering or dissension or worse. Moreover, there was a close personal contact here which had never shown itself to me in any other religion. As I grew to make my own decisions, therefore, I was drawn toward Christianity.

### **Further Personal Influences**

Upon coming to America I was fortunately associated with Christians of the type to be admired. The boarding school which I attended, and later my college, had many teachers of the very highest integrity, and I became convinced that a religion which could actuate people with such motives as theirs was a most worthy one to become a world religion. Naturally as my experience has broadened, I have found that Christians are not always true examples of the highest possibilities of Christianity, but I also realize that this fact is not a true criticism of Christianity, and I am more than ever convinced that the Christian religion truly understood and truly lived has more to offer in the solution of the problems of mankind than has any other religion that we know to-day.

When we realize more of the true spirit of Christianity and understand that it can be given to any people without utterly destroying the values which are ingrained in their lives and which they have for countless generations held dear: then I believe we may look toward the establishment of a real world religion and the dawn of better international understanding and peace.

# The Unique Contribution of Christianity

By ROBERT T. HUANG

To understand Christ, one must understand Christ's own deeds. Every young Christian ought to be inspired by His dynamic life—a life in action and constant struggle. Not a philosopher theorizing or meditating on philosophy or theology, He was a man of action—a great “mixer” among men. At the age of twelve, He went into the synagogue and engaged in asking and answering questions. As a young man, He demonstrated His insurmountable will-power in resisting under physical inconvenience the temptations of the world. As a teacher, He loved and was loved by His disciples. As a physician He healed the sick. He sympathized with the outcasts of society, forgiving them and telling them to sin no more. He participated in social affairs and dined with the rich as well as the poor, the righteous as well as sinners. His life was not a secluded or isolated one but one for and among the people, and all of it was spent for those who needed Him. He was not partial to the righteous, for He said He came to call, not the righteous, but sinners to repentance. In the end, He laid down His life for the sinners of the world, with His last breath asking for forgiveness for His persecutors.

## The Lesson of Christ's Life

What lesson can we draw from this synopsis of His life? It resolves itself into three words: hope, love, and forgiveness, which the following quotation will verify and explain:

“And he spake this parable unto them, saying, what man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?

“And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. . . .

“I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.”

## The Contrast in the Life of Buddha

In contrast to the Life of Christ, Buddha, the founder of the

rival religion, led a life of isolation, meditation, and self-purification. Abhorring the world of lust, selfishness, and hatred, he sought refuge therefrom. He did not try to set an example of life, but taught people how to avoid it.

### What Distinguishes Christianity from Buddhism?

In contrast to the examples of certain individuals who call themselves Christians but behave no better than the heathen, loyal Christian workers of to-day have, under the impetus of the spirit revealed in Christ's own life, gone to the farthest ends of the earth, to live among the suffering peoples of the world, to furnish their necessities, to heal their sickness, and to preach the Gospel. It is this practical point of view toward life, the example of which Christ set, that distinguishes Christianity from its rival, Buddhism.

## What Christ Gives

By DAVID T. HLA

CHRIST does give something which cannot be secured from the religion that has sprung up through the teachings of Gautama Buddha. It must be admitted that in the Buddhist religion there are many principles which are identical with those of the Christian religion. This can be said of all religions, but the difference comes in the living out of these principles, and the individual attitude which each faith creates.

Buddhism in its present form is so full of fantastic ritual that the followers of Buddha pay more attention to routine than to the teachings of Buddha. We find Buddha personified by golden idols or wooden idols as the case may be. Beyond these outer coverings we find that the religion is very pessimistic, inasmuch as it teaches that life is full of misery, and that in order to have peace one must kill the desire which is ever present in human minds. Another doctrine is that everything in the world, including the gods, is impermanent and that all constituents of being are without a soul. The five precepts which Buddha has laid down corresponding to our Ten Commandments no doubt have played a big part in the social life of the people.

Buddha said, "Each man is his own helper; there is none other



to help him." On the other hand we have Christ's idea expressed by Paul, "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure." In the whole religion of Buddhism we are at a loss to find a suggestion Buddha works through men for the coming of the Kingdom as God does, according to our faith.

### The Fundamental Difference

We come to the conclusion that the fundamental difference between Buddhism and Christianity is that "Buddhism really attains to an ethic in words only but not to an ethic in deed," as one writer has said.

To me, the religion of Christ is so much more real and personal that it can hardly be compared to that of Buddhism. Our idea of God is one which is comprehensible. We think of Him as our God and Father. There is a personal relationship that cannot be found in Buddhism. My conception of God is not of an idol but of One to whom I can talk, the personal touch of whose being I can feel through prayer.

When we have Jesus in our hearts we are not satisfied to keep our joy to ourselves after the manner of many other faiths, but we straightway feel that urge, that driving force to go out and tell others of Him who has given us a new outlook on life.

Every man has that craving for a God to love and worship, for One to whom he can pray and One who loves him. These things cannot be eradicated. The Christian God does satisfy the human desire in this respect, and Buddha does not.

## What Christianity Has Contributed to the Progress and Civilization of Burma

By T. CHAN TAIK

THE indigenous religion of my native land, Burma, seems to have been animism or the worship of spirits. Buddhism, now the national religion, was brought from India when Buddhist missionary activity was at its full height. It has prevailed in Burma for over two thousand years. The entire absence of caste, the

open-handed hospitality, and the spirit of reverence for elders and religious leaders are some of the fine traits of national character which are the products of Buddhism.

### **The Essence of Buddhism**

The ethical teachings of the Buddha are high and noble and the dogmas of Buddhism rest on deep philosophical principles. Its metaphysical abstractions are delicate and subtle: the way of salvation through extermination of desire to be achieved by elaborate processes of self-discipline and self-mortification. Its almost complete negation of a personal god causes people in general to lose the real significance of the high ethical code and to satisfy themselves with the observance of the outward forms of religion. So idolatry has crept in, and the formal observance of Sabbaths, the offerings of articles of food, the giving of alms, begin to be looked upon as means of attaining salvation. Yet there are still choice spirits who sincerely seek to follow the path of high endeavour.

The essence of Buddhism is that each individual work out his own salvation. The influence of such a tenet naturally is detrimental to concerted action for the common good. The doctrine of Karma engenders a spirit of fatalism and complete submission to the force of circumstances.

### **The Coming of a New Order**

With the advent of Christianity a new order of things has come into being in every phase of Burmese life. English literature, so surcharged with Christian ideas, has exerted a wide and deep influence over Burmese thought. Even the strongest antagonist of Christianity cannot deny that the message of Christ is leavening the thought of the people and influencing the deeper currents of national life. The teaching of the priceless value of each human soul and of the possibility of direct communion with the Almighty Father must lead to a higher degree of self-respect and a larger spirit of freedom and independence. The new idea of the service of one's people and country has been brought home to the minds of the people by the self-sacrificing labours of missionaries and other true Christians.

By a gradual process a satisfactory system of education is

being evolved. The superstitions of other days are gradually dying out. New thoughts and new aspirations are awakening in the people's minds: for example, the realization that Burma has many precious elements to contribute to the enrichment of mankind. Christianity has effected the elevation of the masses, the civilization of the backward tribes. It stands for ordered liberty, the equality of men regardless of creed or colour, the Fatherhood of God, and the Brotherhood of man everywhere.

It is worthy of note that Christianity has done a good deal to stimulate Buddhists to reform all the traditional institutions so that they may afford scope for physical, intellectual, and social activities.

### An Urgent Problem

There is one dominant and urgent problem to be solved to avoid disaster. Return to the customs and manners of our forefathers would mean retrogression and stagnation. There is danger, on the other hand, in the pursuit of everything because it is Western, and that is the danger of the loss of our own individuality and the stunting of our own genius. What we require is a sincere and simpler form of living, spiritual insight, and Christ-likeness in our daily lives. If we can only foster the spirit of brotherhood and unity born of the spirit of Christ, all hatred and suspicion in the world will pass away like morning mists before the sunshine.

## What Buddhism and Confucianism Cannot Give

By PYUNGTOO WILLIAM LEE

BEING a native of Korea, with six years of academic residence and three of business experience in the West, the writer is able to point out with strong conviction the differences between Christianity, Buddhism, and Confucianism and the superiority of the first-named religion over the other two.

The differences in the religions of the world lie mainly in the emphasis of their teachings. Buddha's strongest emphasis is laid on "self-consecration and the constant quest of eternal glory" for one's self, which is practised by Buddha and his followers,

while Christ emphasized His teaching of "serve thy fellow men", which was demonstrated by His washing the disciples' feet. Confucius, as a great prophet, taught us good morals and here we find nothing wrong with his teachings but one universal lack of spiritual nourishment of human life.

### **A Decisive Sentence**

A short sentence spoken by Christ Himself, "I came not to be ministered unto but to minister" is what made me a convert from Buddhism and Confucianism to Christianity, and my belief in Christ's teachings is strengthened because I have seen that His teachings are carried on and practised by many of His followers, even though there are Christians who fail to live up to them.

### **What Fairness Demands of the Critic**

The general conception of non-Christian people toward Christianity is that the Christians are different from the ordinary people of this world. Knowing that Christ taught meekness, self-sacrifice, and kindness, observers expect too much from Christians. Fairness demands that the critics judge Christians as members of the same human race to which we all belong.

### **Christian Self-Sacrifice**

Careful observation leads me to say with firm conviction that unselfish and self-sacrificing service to others has been practised most effectively by Christians: the missionary enterprise to every land amply demonstrates that fact. I know no other religion that has carried out the missionary enterprise on a world-wide scale with the sole motive of serving others. Dr. John Stuart Conning says, "Its missionary spirit is the very nature of Christianity. No other belief can show such a succession of brave souls who leave home and friends, not for gain or personal advantage, but that they may give themselves in self-denying service for the betterment of neglected communities and alien races".

### **Conclusions**

In conclusion I want to make a few brief statements as to what Christ has to give, in addition to His teachings, which cannot be found or obtained in or through any of the non-Christian religions,



or from any other sources. The faith in Him and in fellow Christians by which we obtain comforting thoughts within ourselves, like a magic feeling, can be found only in Christ and through Him. No such consolation is given by Buddha or other founders of religions. The Christian religion alone gives me satisfaction in life. Buddhism could not give it; Confucianism failed to do so. Peace in our hearts can be obtained only in Him. When our minds are troubled with many conflicting problems we Christians obtain in quiet communion with Christ a peace of mind which is unknown to non-Christians. Finally, Christ has said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." No other prophet could say that. Through Christ alone is eternal life obtained.

## What Christ Means to Me

By JACOB YUK

*(Translation from the Russian)*

My longing toward God began when I was yet a lad. I then felt a very strong impulse to serve some god. I tried to fulfill as rigorously as possible the religious observances known to me as being binding upon every Jew, and I was often even indignant at my mother who showed very little zeal, it seemed to me, in the fulfillment of religious obligations.

But when I tried to serve God by one means or another I never had the feeling that I was actually serving Him. I must add that the reason for my entire zeal toward God was comprehended in the wish not to be punished by God sometime in my later life. As to the idea that the Lord loves me simply as His own creation and that I must not only not fear Him but love Him, of such a thing I had no understanding whatever.

After my seventeenth or eighteenth year I completely ceased to think about God. I did not become an atheist, but grew very indifferent about my relation to God. I thought only about myself, only about how best to shape my own earthly life. But notwithstanding supreme efforts I was entirely unable to succeed in the attainment of that which I sought. Thus matters continued for a very long time. It must be said that within a little while

I fell completely, from the moral standpoint, since for the attainment of my aims I did not especially reckon with my own conscience.

When I was finally completely weakened in my struggle, I began to think that if God actually existed then He and He only could help me. And quickly (before I had thought it through) I felt Him in my entire being. The more I thought about God the more strongly I felt that there was Some One who knew perfectly my whole life, who knew and could help me. But how should I ask Him to help me?

### Attention Turned Toward Christ

At this same time it happened that as I was walking along a street in Odessa I came by chance upon a meeting of a Jewish Christian congregation. That caught my interest because it had been difficult for me to associate the conception of Jew and that of Christian. Here I heard about Christ. They were recognizing Him as the God and Messiah of the Israelitish people. The thought that Christ is God seemed to me extremely strange. How could a man be God? All the same I secured the Gospels and began to read. The words of the Gospel impressed me with their simplicity and clearness. And it seemed to me that in my reading some one was talking with me in a specially friendly fashion and convincing me. Not yet accepting Christ as my God, I nevertheless began to apply His teaching very closely to myself and tried to carry it out in my life, but in this I succeeded very badly. Then I tried to appeal to Christ privately in prayer, praying Him to help me. Very quickly I received an answer to my prayer. Christ gave me everything for which I prayed to Him and gave it very unmistakably. For me there remained no doubt that Christ was not only a man but more. He heard secret prayer. I began to pray systematically to Him and to receive answers to my prayers.

But then doubt came to me. It seemed as if a voice overwhelmed me with the insistent question, "Tell me, to whom do you pray more, to the Father or to the Son? If to the Son, then why not to the Father, and if to the Father, why not to the Son? Whom do you more especially serve, the Father or the Son?" This question often paralyzed my prayers; my youthful faith in

Christ as the Son of God was beginning to be weakened. Then I turned to the Scriptures. Up to that time I had accepted Christ as the Son of God, knowing of His help only through personal experience. But that experience demanded further foundation and strengthening in the word of God. I began to read the prophecies about Christ and was especially struck by the passages in the prophet Isaiah, Chapter LIII, and also by the passage where the prophet says: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." (Isaiah IX:6)

### Victory

I felt that I was standing on firm ground. Christ became not only my helper but also God. He was both the Son and the everlasting Father. He became also my Saviour from moral ruin and from sin. Constantly more frequent was His help in the struggle with temptation. New strength was given me. I strongly felt the love of Christ for me. Fear of punishment no longer actuated me in my service of God, but love of Christ and unwillingness to offend Him. His love encouraged me to rise to constantly higher spiritual levels. During ten and a half years He has kept me, strengthened me, and led me forward. He helped me during my last years in the *gymnasium*, helped me when I became a student, keeping me from harm and moral bankruptcy. Also now He fills me with His joy and spiritual peace. He drives from the heart fear for the future. He is leading me constantly forward, constantly closer to my goal: to His mighty Kingdom and to everlasting life with Him.



# Why I Became a Christian

By J. C. FAJANS

I should scarcely have become interested in Christianity for the mere reason that it has a high moral teaching: the Jewish faith also has high moral truths and after all, Christianity has its origin in the Jewish faith. In my arsenal of arguments, I always used to retain the well-known sentence of Hillel, who when a Gentile begged to be taught the Mosaic law, responded, "Do not to another what you would not wish done to you."

## The Jewish Religion a System of Rules

Actually the Jewish faith endeavoured to maintain this law, but in vain. It is in its present state a mixture of rules, which tend to bind (*religare*) a man and govern his behaviour from early morning till late in the night and from birth to the grave. They relate only to the eyes, the mouth, the ears, the hands, and the feet but they have nothing to do with the heart. The prayers repeated regularly each day, the special rules as to bathing, food, and raiment, have not according to my observation raised the moral life of the Jews, and when united with a wicked life the observances produce a fearful hypocrisy. Consequently atheism is widespread amid the Jewish youth.

## Judaism Unable to Answer Questions

Besides this, in the Jewish religion I found no satisfactory solution of the problem of death and the whole question of suffering. The sufferings and dispersion of the Jewish people led me always to the thought that it must have been a result of a fatal fault. But having ceased to occupy myself with the faults of others, I began to concern myself with my own. I have found that at bottom the ethical system of every religion is a sort of tribunal before which the seeking soul is judged. And the higher the moral teaching, the deeper is the abyss between it and actual practice. I had reached the point where I was not so much interested in moral teachings as in the question, Who fulfills the teaching and by whom can one be taught to fulfill it?



## The Need of a Personal Union with God

Finally it has become clear to me that the soul needs a personal union with God.

That is necessary in order that:—(1) the soul may see its faults and sins in the light of God, and (2) that it may have from without power to get rid of these faults and to live in God.

But if the contemporary Jewish religion cherishing this aim had not yet attained to it, yet the prophecies did contain a remedy for the all-pervasive formalism—the Tree of Life in the person of the God-man, who shows us what manner of man one should be, and who, as the King of the Universe, has power to help us to reach this ideal of the God-man.

With Him, the Christ-Messiah, there can be no personal comparison. Above all, He is so pure that no one can be found who will not say, like the apostle Peter:—"Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." (Luke V:8) And there is nobody to whom He, having heard such a confession, would not have said:—"Follow me." And following Him signifies to make use of His power:—"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." (Matthew XXVIII:18) Instantly a look upon Him shows what I lack and wherein my heart is not right.

To worship Him and to pray to Him fills the thirsty and the hungry with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, who edifies and renews, gives another life, and makes from the old Adam a new creature. Ethics only makes demands. Christ exhorts and gives.

## I Believe in Christ

I believe in Christ according to the Scriptures, that He was born of the Virgin (impossible from the human standpoint, but possible for God); that on the third day He rose (in the body) from the dead (having in Himself everlasting life He gives it to others); and that He has given to the Church on earth a great purpose: "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." (Mark XVI:15)

Christ has given me the goal of life, "the everlasting life," in the communion with God, has called me to serve Him, has opened to me a real understanding of the Scriptures, life, and

people, has given me steadfastness amid the storms of life, and above all, peace to my soul through evidence that we are in His hands. He has taken away enmity toward other men, has given me Christian friends. Every day He comforts me, cheers me, and says, "Do not be afraid, believe only."

No system of ethics is capable of doing this. The most religious of the Jews could not say that he has such a possession.